

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
TRSE-00 IO-13 ACDA-07 CU-02 DHA-02 /082 W  
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R 241350Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5876  
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN  
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 03336

E.O.11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, WB, GW, GE  
SUBJECT: FRG REACTION TO THE HONECKER INTERVIEW

REFS: (A) USBER 540; (B) BERLIN 5349

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE FOREIGN OFFICE FINDS NOTHING  
BASICALLY NEW IN HONECKER'S SAARBRUECKER ZEITUNG  
INTERVIEW. RATHER, THE INTERVIEW SEEMS TO REFLECT THE  
MIXTURE OF SIGNALS ABOUT THE DIRECTION THE GDR INTENDS  
TO FOLLOW IN INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS WHICH THE FRG  
IS ATTEMPTING TO DECIPHER. THE PROBLEM WILL NO DOUBT  
BE THE MAIN AGENDA ITEM AT THE FORTHCOMING MEETING OF  
THE CHANCELLOR'S GROUP ON INNER-GERMAN AFFAIRS. END  
SUMMARY.

1. IN FEBRUARY 23 BONN GROUP MEETING, ALLIED REPS  
ASKED FRG REP (HENZE) HOW THE FRG EVALUATED SED  
GENERAL SECRETARY HONECKER'S FEB. 17 INTERVIEW IN THE  
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SAARBRUECKER ZEITUNG.

2. HENZE REPLIED THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAD NOT YET  
DISCUSSED THE INTERVIEW WITH THE CHANCELLERY AND THE  
INNER-GERMAN AFFAIRS MINISTRY. IN AN OVERALL  
SENSE, THE FOREIGN OFFICE DID NOT THINK THAT THE  
INTERVIEW CONTAINED ANY BASICALLY NEW IDEAS, ALTHOUGH

IT DID INDICATE GDR POSITIONS ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES,  
IN PARTICULAR INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS, BERLIN AND THE  
BELGRADE CSCE FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE.

3. ON INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS, THE INTERVIEW SEEMED TO  
BE ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE OF BOTH THE GDR AND THE  
FRG. WHILE HONECKER SEEMED TO BE TRYING TO SELL THE  
GDR POINT OF VIEW TO THE FRG POPULATION, THE TONE WAS  
HARD. ACCORDING TO HENZE, THE INTERVIEW INDICATED  
AGAIN THE INSECURITY OF THE GDR AND THEIR AWARENESS  
OF THE UNSETTLED STATUS OF THE GERMAN SITUATION.  
HENZE ADDED THAT HONECKER'S REMARK CONNECTING THE  
GERMAN NATIONALITY QUESTION TO FREER TRAVEL FOR GDR  
CITIZENS CONFIRMED THE FOREIGN OFFICE VIEW THAT THE  
GDR WILL CONCENTRATE ON THE CITIZENSHIP ISSUE IN THE  
FUTURE.

4. ON CSCE, THE INTERVIEW INDICATED AGAIN THAT THE  
GDR WOULD LIKE TO AVOID A QUARREL AT BELGRADE BUT  
FEARS IT WILLBE ATTACKED BY THE WEST ON HUMANITARIAN  
QUESTIONS. IN PREPARATION, THE GDR SEEMS TO BE  
TRYING TO BUILD UP A BASIS FOR ATTACKING THE FRG IN  
THIS AREA.

5. ON BERLIN, HENZE FOUND HONECKER'S REMARKS TO BE  
VERY CAREFULLY WORDED. ON THE ONE HAND, HE HAD NOTED  
THAT THE GDR WAS A NON-SIGNATORY OF THE QA AND HAD  
ASSOCIATED THE GDR WITH THE WARSAW PACT'S VIEW, NOT  
CLAIMING A SPECIAL RIGHT TO OVERSEE THE QA.  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 03336

ON THE OTHER HAND, HE RESUMED, AFTER LONG SILENCE ON THE SUBJECT, THE ATTACKS ON VISITS OF SCHEEL AND SCHMIDT TO BERLIN. HE ALSO REPEATED THE GDR CLAIMS THAT THE FOUR POWER STATUS OF THE CITY HAD ENDED AND THAT BERLIN IS THE CAPITAL AND AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE GDR.

6. COMMENT: HENZE'S COMMENTS ARE IN LINE WITH THE GENERALLY BALANCED MANNER IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO HAVE REACTED TO HONECKER'S INTERVIEW. FOLLOWING PUBLICATION, GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN BOELLING FLATLY REJECTED HONECKER'S ATTEMPT TO LINK THE CITIZENSHIP QUESTION WITH FREER TRAVEL FOR GDR CITIZENS AS WELL AS HIS REMARKS ON THE BORDER AND THE STATUS OF BERLIN. ON THE OTHER HAND, BOELLING SAID THE INTERVIEW WOULD BE CAREFULLY NOTED. MUCH OF THIS, IN OUR VIEW, REFLECTS THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS YET TO DETERMINE TO ITS OWN SATISFACTION WHERE GDR POLICY IS HEADING. THERE IS CONFIDENTIAL

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A GENERAL RECOGNITION THAT THE GDR HAS REEVALUATED ITS "WESTPOLITIK" AND HAS COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IT HAS PAID TOO HIGH A PRICE IN HUMAN CONTACTS AND REGIME STABILITY. IT IS APPARENT THAT RETRENCHMENT IS THE ORDER OF THE DAY; HOWEVER, THE FRG GOVERNMENT IS UNCERTAIN HOW MUCH AND IN WHAT SPECIFIC AREAS ADDITIONAL GDR RETRENCHMENT IS TO BE ANTICIPATED. IN THAT REGARD, THE MIXTURE OF SIGNALS IN THE HONECKER INTERVIEW WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE THE UNCERTAINTY IN BONN RATHER THAN ANSWER THE QUESTIONS. THE PROBLEM OF WHERE TO GO FROM HERE WILL NO DOUBT BE THE MAIN AGENDA ITEM AT THE FORTHCOMING ASSESSMENT MEETING OF THE CHANCELLOR'S GROUP ON INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, FINANCE MINISTER APEL AND ECONOMICS MINISTER FRIDERICHs WILL JOIN THE CHANCELLOR, WISCHNEWSKI, FRANKE AND GENSCHER IN THE MEETING WHICH

MAY INDICATE THE DIRECTION OF FRG THINKING. END COMMENT.  
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